United Nations E/2008/SR.43

Economic and Social Council

Provisional

15 September 2008

Original: English

Substantive session of 2008
Coordination segment
General segment

Provisional summary record of the 43rd meeting
Held at Headquarters, New York, on Thursday, 24 July 2008, at 3 p.m.

President: Mr. Lima (Vice-President) ..... (Cape Verde)

Contents

The role of the United Nations system in implementing the ministerial declaration of the high-level segment of the substantive session of 2007 of the Council (*continued*)

Economic and social repercussions of the Israeli occupation on the living conditions of the Palestinian people in the occupied Palestinian territory, including Jerusalem, and the Arab population in the occupied Syrian Golan (*continued*)

Corrections to this record should be submitted in one of the working languages. They should be set forth in a memorandum and also incorporated in a copy of the record. They should be sent *within one week of the date of this document* to the Chief, Official Records Editing Section, room DC2-750, 2 United Nations Plaza.

08-43733 (E)

In the absence of Mr. Mérorès (Haiti), Mr. Lima (Cape Verde), Vice-President, took the Chair.

The meeting was called to order at 3.15 p.m.

The role of the United Nations system in implementing the ministerial declaration of the high-level segment of the substantive session of 2007 of the Council (*continued*) (E/2008/21; E/2008/L.22 and L.29)

Draft resolution entitled "The role of the United Nations system in implementing the ministerial declaration on strengthening efforts to eradicate poverty and hunger, including through the global partnership for development, adopted at the high-level segment of the substantive session of 2007 of the Economic and Social Council" (E/2008/L.22)

1. **The President** drew attention to draft resolution E/2008/L.22 entitled "The role of the United Nations system in implementing the ministerial declaration on strengthening efforts to eradicate poverty and hunger, including through the global partnership for development, adopted at the high-level segment of the substantive session of 2007 of the Economic and Social Council" and noted that it contained no programme budget implications.

2. **Ms. Pliner** (Secretary of the Council) said that a comma should have been inserted after the word "development" in paragraph 9.

3. *Draft resolution E/2008/L.22, as orally corrected, was adopted.*

4. **Mr. Delacroix** (France), speaking on behalf of the European Union, said that the European Union attached great importance to the attainment of all the Millennium Development Goals; the fact that those Goals were interdependent required an integrated approach. The United Nations system must therefore adopt a multidimensional approach when tackling poverty and hunger. In that connection, the resolution should have mentioned, in addition to science and technology, the need for sustained economic growth, the importance of taking into account the three pillars of sustainable development, the promotion of full productive employment, the achievement of decent work for all, the need to develop social services, and the promotion of gender equality and empowerment of women.

5. Furthermore, the European Union understood paragraph 6 of the resolution to refer to coordination among the funds, programmes and agencies of the United Nations in their development activities, within their mandates and on the basis of existing texts. Lastly, the implementation of the global partnership for development required first and foremost the engagement of all Member States, in partnership with civil society, non-governmental organizations and the private sector. The United Nations system's role was simply to support the action of Member States.

Draft resolution entitled "Role of the Economic and Social Council in the integrated and coordinated implementation of the outcomes of and follow-up to major United Nations conferences and summits, in light of relevant General Assembly resolutions, including resolution 61/16" (E/2008/L.29)

6. **The President** drew attention to draft resolution E/2008/L.29 entitled "Role of the Economic and Social Council in the integrated and coordinated implementation of the outcomes of and follow-up to major United Nations conferences and summits, in light of relevant General Assembly resolutions, including resolution 61/16" and noted that it contained no programme budget implications.

7. *Draft resolution E/2008/L.29 was adopted.*

Oral decision

8. **The President** suggested that the Council take note of the report of the Secretary-General on the role of the United Nations system in implementing the Ministerial Declaration of the high-level segment of the 2007 substantive session of the Economic and Social Council (E/2008/21).

9. *It was so decided.*

Economic and social repercussions of the Israeli occupation on the living conditions of the Palestinian people in the occupied Palestinian territory, including Jerusalem, and the Arab population in the occupied Syrian Golan (*continued*) (E/2008/13; E/2008/L.26)

Draft resolution entitled "Economic and social repercussions of the Israeli occupation on the living conditions of the Palestinian people in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, and the Arab population in the occupied Syrian Golan" (E/2008/L.26)

10. **Mr. Benfreha** (Algeria), introducing draft resolution E/2008/L.26 entitled "Economic and social repercussions of the Israeli occupation on the living conditions of the Palestinian people in the Occupied

Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, and the Arab population in the occupied Syrian Golan", said that South Africa had joined the sponsors. The word "mother" should be inserted before the word "homeland" in paragraph 12 of the draft resolution.

11. As noted in the report prepared by the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia on the same subject (E/2008/13), the Israeli occupation of the Palestinian territory and Syrian Golan continued to intensify the economic and social hardship of the Palestinian and Syrian people. The report painted a bleak picture of high unemployment, rampant poverty and rising health-related problems among the Palestinian population, particularly in the Gaza Strip and confirmed that illegal Israeli settlements, the confiscation and destruction of Palestinian land and the unlawful construction of the wall in the occupied Palestinian territory, including East Jerusalem, continued to have negative repercussions on Palestinian people's living conditions. Indeed, such illegal policies curtailed normal economic and social life, and fuelled and prolonged the conflict. The report also documented the continued negative impact of Israeli settlements in the occupied Syrian Golan on the Syrian people's access to their natural resources and social services, and the threat posed by Israeli landmines to Syrian Arab villagers in the occupied Syrian Golan.

12. The draft resolution was very similar to the resolution adopted the previous year. In addition, it expressed grave concern about the continuation of settlement activities and other related measures in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, as well as in the occupied Syrian Golan; stressed the importance of national unity among the Palestinian people, and emphasized the need for the respect and preservation of the territorial integrity and unity of the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem; and called upon Israel to comply with the provisions of the Fourth Geneva Convention, and to facilitate the visits of Syrian citizens of the occupied Syrian Golan whose family members resided in their homeland, the Syrian Arab Republic, via the Qunaitra entrance.

13. He hoped that the draft resolution would be adopted by consensus and that it might help alleviate the misery and untold suffering of the Palestinian civilian population living under Israel's 41-year-old occupation.

14. **The President** said that Indonesia, Malaysia and Mauritania had become sponsors of the draft resolution and that action would be taken thereon at a later stage.

The meeting rose at 3.35 p.m.

United Nations E/2008/SR.44

Economic and Social Council

Provisional

3 October 2008

Original: English

Substantive session of 2008
General segment

Provisional summary record of the 44th meeting
Held at Headquarters, New York, on Friday, 25 July 2008, at 10 a.m.

President: Mr. Hoscheit (Vice-President) ..... (Luxembourg)

Contents

Social and human rights questions (*continued*)

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(a) Advancement of women (*continued*)

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(g) Human rights (*continued*)

(h) Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues (*continued*)

United Nations research and training institutes (*continued*)

Economic and social repercussions of the Israeli occupation on the living conditions of the Palestinian people in the occupied Palestinian territory, including Jerusalem, and the Arab population in the occupied Syrian Golan (*continued*)

Implementation of and follow-up to major United Nations conferences and summits (*continued*)

(b) Review and coordination of the implementation of the Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries for the Decade 2001-2010 (*continued*)

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08-43928 (E)

In the absence of Mr. Mérorès (Haiti), Mr. Hoscheit (Luxembourg), Vice-President, took the Chair.

The meeting was called to order at 10.05 a.m.

Social and human rights questions (*continued*) (E/2007/76; E/2008/L.31)

Draft resolution entitled "Strengthening coordination of the United Nations and other efforts in fighting trafficking in persons" (E/2008/L.31)

1. **Mr. Rachkov** (Belarus), introducing the draft resolution, said that China, Ecuador, Japan, Kazakhstan, Mexico, the Philippines and the Russian Federation had become sponsors. He read out a series of revisions: the words "that fosters all forms of exploitation of persons, especially women and children, and that thus promotes trafficking" should be added at the end of the eleventh preambular paragraph; the word "within" should be deleted from paragraph 1; the words "human trafficking" should be replaced by "trafficking in persons" in paragraph 3; "(UN.GIFT)" should be added after "the United Nations Global Initiative to Fight Human Trafficking" in paragraph 9; and the word "States" should be added before "Parties" in paragraph 11.

2. **Mr. Khane** (Secretary of the Council), speaking on the programme budget implications of the draft resolution, noted that in paragraph 12, the Council reiterated its request to the Secretary-General to provide the United Nations Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice Programme with sufficient resources for the full implementation of its mandates, in conformity with its high priorities, and to provide adequate support to the Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice. He drew attention to General Assembly resolution 45/248 B, part VI, and subsequent resolutions, most recently resolution 62/236, in which the Assembly had reaffirmed that the Fifth Committee was the appropriate Main Committee of the General Assembly entrusted with responsibilities for administrative and budgetary matters; it had also reaffirmed the role of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions in that regard.

3. *Draft resolution E/2008/L.31, as orally revised, was adopted.*

4. **Mr. Heidt** (United States of America), explaining his delegation's position, said that as the resolution highlighted, the problem of human trafficking called for a comprehensive approach that addressed both demand and supply, fostered the rule of law and combated corruption. The Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime provided a forum for cooperation in those areas through implementation of its Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children. The Protocol set forth a road map of minimum requirements that governments must meet in order to prevent trafficking, prosecute and convict offenders and protect and assist victims, and his delegation encouraged all Member States to be guided by it.

5. The work of multilateral organizations was integral to support for the efforts of committed governments to meet the international standards for combating human trafficking. His delegation encouraged entities such as the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), the United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM), the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), the International Labour Organization (ILO), the International Organization for Migration (IOM) and other relevant agencies to continue their efforts to combat trafficking, focus on their core competencies and ensure that their efforts were complementary with each other and with local efforts. To that end, Member States should call on the Inter-Agency Cooperation Group Against Trafficking in Persons (ICAT) to explore, in consultation with Member States, ways for multilateral organizations to align their programmatic efforts with the goals of the Protocol in order to reduce duplication and assist governments.

Implementation of and follow-up to major United Nations summits (*continued*)

Report of the Secretary-General on the Role of the Economic and Social Council in the integrated and coordinated implementation of and follow-up to the outcomes of the major United Nations conferences and summits, in the light of relevant General Assembly resolutions, including resolution 61/16 (E/2008/77)

6. **The President** suggested that the Council should take note of the report of the Secretary-General on the Role of the Economic and Social Council in the integrated and coordinated implementation of and follow-up to the outcomes of the major United Nations conferences and summits, in the light of relevant General Assembly resolutions, including resolution 61/16 (E/2008/77).

7. *It was so decided.*

Coordination, programme and other questions (*continued*)

(f) Ad hoc advisory groups on African countries emerging from conflict (*continued*) (E/2008/L.34)

Draft resolution entitled "Ad Hoc Advisory Group on Guinea-Bissau" (E/2008/L.34)

8. **The President** said that the draft resolution had no programme budget implications.

9. *Draft resolution E/2008/L.34 was adopted.*

Economic and environmental questions (*continued*)

(g) Public administration and development (*continued*) (E/2008/L.30 and E/2008/L.33)

Draft decision entitled "Report of the Committee of Experts on Public Administration on its seventh session and provisional agenda for its eighth session" (E/2008/L.30)

10. **The President** said that the draft decision had no programme budget implications.

11. *Draft decision E/2008/L.30 was adopted.*

Draft resolution entitled "Report of the Committee of Experts on Public Administration on its seventh session" (E/2008/L.33)

12. **The President** said that the draft resolution had no programme budget implications.

13. *Draft resolution E/2008/L.33 was adopted.*

Social and human rights questions (*continued*) (E/2007/76)

(a) Advancement of women (*continued*) (E/2008/62, E/2008/73 and E/2008/91; E/2008/L.32)

Draft resolution entitled "Mainstreaming a gender perspective into all policies and programmes of the United Nations system" (E/2008/L.32)

14. **The President** said that the draft resolution had no programme budget implications.

15. *Draft resolution E/2008/L.32 was adopted.*

16. **Mr. Delacroix** (France), speaking on behalf of the European Union, said that adoption of the draft resolution demonstrated the Council's commitment to the issue. The European Union also welcomed the report of the Secretary-General on mainstreaming a gender perspective into all policies and programmes of the United Nations system (E/2008/53). Although he would have wished for a more thorough examination of the report's content, he was pleased that Member States had unanimously approved the recommendations contained therein and looked forward to their implementation by the United Nations system.

17. The General Assembly had reaffirmed the importance of gender mainstreaming in the United Nations system as a key tool for achieving the equality and empowerment of women and a prerequisite to achievement of the internationally agreed development goals, including the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). He stressed the importance of section C, "Gender equality and women's empowerment" of General Assembly resolution 62/208 (on the triennial comprehensive policy review of operational activities for development of the United Nations system), which reiterated the need for the organizations of the United Nations development system to mainstream a gender perspective and to pursue gender equality and the empowerment of women in their country programmes.

18. **The President** suggested that the Council should take note of the report of the Secretary-General on future work to strengthen the International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women (E/2008/62), the Report of the Executive Board of the United Nations International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women on the work of its fifth session (E/2008/73) and the note by the Secretariat containing a report on the results of the fortieth session of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (E/2008/91).

19. *It was so decided.*

(e) United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (*continued*) (E/2008/L.11)

Draft decision entitled "Enlargement of the Executive Committee of the Programme of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees" (E/2008/L.11).

20. **The President** said that the draft decision had no programme budget implications.

21. *Draft decision E/2008/L.11 was adopted.*

22. **The President** suggested that the Council should take note of the oral report delivered at its 42nd

meeting by the Deputy Director of the New York Office of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR).

23. *It was so decided.*

(g) Human rights (*continued*) (A/63/41; E/2007/22 and E/2008/76)

24. **The President** suggested that the Council should take note of the report of the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights on its thirty-sixth and thirty-seventh sessions (E/2007/22), the report of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (E/2008/76) and the report of the Committee on the Rights of the Child (A/63/41).

25. *It was so decided.*

26. **Mr. Heidt** (United States of America), speaking in exercise of the right of reply, responded to comments made by the representative of Cuba at the 42nd meeting, under the agenda item on human rights, concerning the United States Interests Section in Havana. It was his Government's policy to provide humanitarian assistance to the Cuban people and, specifically, to the families of political prisoners and to allow private American organizations to do so. Cuba had recently signed the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and his delegation hoped that it would soon ratify that instrument. One way for the Cuban Government to demonstrate its commitment to that instrument and to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the dissemination of which it currently prohibited, would be to release the more than 200 prisoners of conscience, both men and women, who were languishing in its prisons because they disagreed with its policies and practices.

27. On the previous day, the United States of America had sponsored a panel discussion, held at United Nations Headquarters, at which six brave men and women had shared their stories of repression, persecution, imprisonment, torture and sacrifice. One panellist was the sister of a former political prisoner. Coincidentally, on the day of the panel, her brother had been told that he would be permitted to leave Cuba if he agreed never to return; he had refused to accept exile from his homeland. The Government of Cuba should respect its obligations under the aforementioned Covenant and Declaration by allowing him freely to leave and return to his own country.

28. His delegation shared the views expressed by over 60 Member States in a Declaration on Prisoners of Conscience (A/62/858), circulated on the occasion of the sixtieth anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, which called on all nations to work for the freedom of such prisoners throughout the world.

29. **Mr. Gala López** (Cuba), speaking in exercise of the right of reply, said that the hateful, unfounded statements made by the representative of the United States of America were yet another example of the arrogance of a decadent superpower that sought imperial domination over the entire world. His delegation rejected every word of those lies and considered that the United States of America had no moral authority to judge the heroic Cuban people.

30. It was unacceptable that United Nations facilities were being used to carry out negative campaigns against Member States and to promote confrontation, distrust and hidden agendas directed against sovereign nations; the panel mentioned by the previous speaker had set a negative precedent for the proper functioning and credibility of the Organization. The United States of America was the worst violator of all human rights. It did not recognize the right to development, food or health or the rights of women and children, yet it sought to present itself as a great defender of so-called "prisoners of conscience" by falsely accusing countries that it tried to dominate in yet another attempt to hide its own abominable crimes.

31. The United States was trying to create a smokescreen in order to conceal the human rights violations that it was committing in Abu Ghraib and at its illegal Guantánamo Bay Naval Base, where hundreds of prisoners had been tortured and subjected to cruel, humiliating and inhuman treatment using reprehensible methods for the past five years and held in a legal limbo in violation of international law.

32. In the United States, five Cuban counter-terrorism fighters were being subjected to a lengthy period of cruel and unjust imprisonment following a politicized trial and its Government defended asphyxia as a legitimate method for extracting confessions. The Bush administration was responsible for illegally detaining hundreds of foreigners for years, allegedly in order to interrogate them about the criminal terrorist acts of 11 September 2001.

33. Instead of solving those problems, the United States had tried to portray common criminals who had

been prosecuted in Cuba for crimes such as forgery of documents, illegal possession of weapons and sabotage as former prisoners of conscience. The alleged "peaceful activist" had been involved in numerous acts of violence against civil servants and public order and had frequently received large sums of money from the United States authorities in payment for his crimes.

34. Recruiting, advising and providing financial and logistical support to mercenaries on Cuban soil in the service of United States policy had been key objectives in its anti-Cuban strategy. Washington had always sought to manipulate traitors and advocates of annexation in its pay in order to create the false perception of a battle among Cubans.

(b) Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues *(continued)* (E/2008/43)

35. **The President** suggested that the Council should take note of the report of the Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues on its seventh session (E/2008/43).

36. *It was so decided.*

United Nations research and training institutes *(continued)* (E/2008/L.37)

Draft resolution entitled "United Nations Institute for Training and Research" (E/2008/L.37)

37. **The President** said that the draft resolution had no programme budget implications.

38. *Draft resolution E/2008/L.37 was adopted.*

Economic and social repercussions of the Israeli occupation on the living conditions of the Palestinian people in the occupied Palestinian territory, including Jerusalem, and the Arab population in the occupied Syrian Golan *(continued)* (E/2008/13; E/2008/L.26)

Draft resolution entitled "Economic and social repercussions of the Israeli occupation on the living conditions of the Palestinian people in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, and the Arab population in the occupied Syrian Golan" (E/2008/L.26)

39. **The President** said that Indonesia, Malaysia and South Africa had become sponsors of the draft resolution, which, as orally revised, had no programme budget implications.

40. **Mr. Benfreha** (Algeria) proposed inserting, after the sixteenth preambular paragraph, a new paragraph, which would read, "*Emphasizing* the importance of the safety and well-being of all civilians, and calling for the cessation of all acts of violence, including all acts of terror, provocation, incitement, destruction, and all firing of rockets,". The twentieth preambular paragraph would be revised to read "*Recognizing* the efforts being undertaken by the Palestinian Authority, with international support, to rebuild, reform and strengthen its damaged institutions and promote good governance, and emphasizing the need to preserve the Palestinian institutions and infrastructure and to ameliorate economic and social conditions,". Lastly, the following words should be added at the end of paragraph 5: "and expresses deep concern at any actions which threaten the integrity of the border crossings and the distribution of fuel".

41. **Mr. Heidt** (United States of America), speaking in explanation of vote before the voting, said that his delegation would vote against the draft resolution because it was unbalanced, criticizing Israel while ignoring the targeting of civilians by Palestinian terrorists. The United States of America remained deeply concerned about the impact of the current humanitarian crisis on the entire Palestinian population and regretted that both Palestinian and Israeli civilians had lost their lives during the recent clashes in the Gaza Strip.

42. While he appreciated that the draft resolution highlighted the importance of promoting good governance, ensuring the safety and well-being of civilians and halting all acts of violence, it was inconsistent with the universalist values of the Council. Sensitive permanent status issues, such as those involving refugees, must be resolved through negotiations between the parties. The United States was committed to working with the Quartet and with regional States to move both parties forward towards President Bush's vision of two States, Israel and Palestine, living side by side in peace and security. The focus of the international community should be on helping both parties maintain progress towards that shared objective. One-sided resolutions only served to undermine the ability of the United Nations to play a constructive role in furthering peace.

43. *At the request of the representative of Algeria, a vote was taken by roll-call.*

44. *Cuba, having been drawn by lot by the President, was called upon to vote first.*

In favour:

Algeria, Angola, Austria, Barbados, Belarus, Benin, Bolivia, Brazil, Cape Verde, China, Congo, Cuba, Czech Republic, El Salvador, France, Greece, Guinea-Bissau, Guyana, Haiti, Iceland, Indonesia, Iraq, Kazakhstan, Liechtenstein, Luxembourg, Malawi, Malaysia, Mauritania, Moldova, Mozambique, Netherlands, New Zealand, Niger, Pakistan, Paraguay, Philippines, Poland, Portugal, Republic of Korea, Romania, Russian Federation, Saint Lucia, Saudi Arabia, Somalia, Sri Lanka, Sudan, Sweden, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, Uruguay.

Against:

Canada, United States of America.

Abstaining:

Cameroon, Japan.

45. *Draft resolution E/2008/L.26, as orally revised, was adopted by 49 votes to 2, with 2 abstentions.*

46. **Ms. Hulan** (Canada) said that her delegation had voted against the resolution even though it strongly supported the Palestinian people and shared the concerns expressed about their difficult living conditions. While some positive changes had been made to the original text of the resolution, it remained one-sided in its criticism of Israel and still did not sufficiently reflect the responsibilities and obligations of the Palestinian Authority to secure the economic and social well-being of its people.

47. **Ms. Saito** (Japan) said that her delegation had abstained from voting on the resolution because the issues raised therein were political in nature and therefore not suited to debate by the Council. She also regretted that action had been taken without sufficient consultation with the entire membership and in contravention of the 24-hour rule. Adopting such a politically sensitive resolution without due process did not contribute to the goals of the Council and would not promote a long-lasting solution to the issue it was intended to address.

48. **Mr. Fluss** (Observer for Israel) said that Council resolutions should be non-political, focusing instead on issues of economic and social concern. The resolution dealt with the Israeli-Palestinian conflict in a biased manner and therefore should not have been considered by the Council. While a few new elements had been introduced at the current session, the text remained unbalanced and politically motivated.

49. Palestinians should have a thriving economy and further opportunities for growth and Israel was committed to facilitating the delivery of necessary humanitarian aid and supplies to the Gaza Strip, despite its growing lawlessness and instability. The terrorist attacks carried out by Palestinians against Israel were obstacles to the social and economic well-being of the Palestinian people. Israel was committed to the peace process and believed that bilateral negotiations were the only way forward. By seeking to assign blame, however, the resolution undermined that bilateral dialogue. Delegations who believed in the future of the peace process should not have supported it and, in the future, should refrain from supporting politically motivated draft resolutions at the Council's meetings.

50. **Mr. Ali** (Observer for the Syrian Arab Republic) said that the revised text of paragraph 17 of the resolution had been included hastily and his delegation had not been consulted about it during the negotiations. The paragraph placed Israel — the perpetrator — and the Palestinian people — the victims — on an equal footing. It was Israel that was occupying the Palestinian territories and was using tanks and aircraft against defenceless civilians, destroying their homes and carrying out State terrorism and war crimes in violation of international humanitarian law, the Fourth Geneva Convention and the relevant United Nations resolutions.

51. Since the international community and international law, embodied in the United Nations, had thus far been unable to ensure Israel's respect for the rights of the people of the occupied Palestinian territory and the occupied Syrian Golan, those people had the right, under international law, to resist occupation by all available means.

52. **Ms. Rasheed** (Observer for Palestine) thanked the delegations that had voted in favour of the resolution. The Palestinian people in the occupied territory had been forced to live under a brutal military occupation that imposed untold misery and suffering. After 41 years of occupation, she hoped that Israel would finally heed the calls by the international community, embodied in the draft resolution, to comply with international law by ending its occupation

and oppression of the Palestinian people and allowing them to live in their own independent State with East Jerusalem as its capital. Only then could her people develop and prosper.

53. Her delegation would continue to ask the United Nations, as a guardian of human rights, to pronounce on the issue until Israel ended its occupation of the occupied Palestinian territory, including East Jerusalem and the occupied Syrian Golan. She also called on Israel to take action against the Israeli settlers responsible for the recent injuries and deaths in the West Bank and to hold them accountable for their illegal actions.

54. **The President** said that if there was no objection, he would that it that the Council wished to take note of the Secretary-General's note on the economic and social repercussions of the Israeli occupation on the living conditions of the Palestinian people in the occupied Palestinian territory, including East Jerusalem, and of the Arab population in the occupied Syrian Golan (E/2008/13).

55. *It was so decided.*

Implementation of and follow-up to major United Nations conferences and summits *(continued)*

(b) Review and coordination of the implementation of the Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries for the Decade 2001-2010 *(continued)*

*Draft resolution entitled "Review and coordination of the Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries for the decade 2001-2010"**

56. **The President** said that the draft resolution, which had been circulated in English only without a symbol, had no programme budget implications.

57. **Ms. Houngbedji** (Benin) said that the draft resolution in its current form was only a rough draft; its adoption should be deferred.

58. **Mr. Matwang'a** (Kenya) read out drafting changes which had not been finalized because negotiations had finished late the previous night. He would nevertheless suggest adopting the text on the understanding that the Secretariat would finalize and issue it in the near future.

59. **The President** appealed to the Council to adopt the draft resolution in the knowledge that its content reflected the agreements reached, even if its formal appearance was far from habitual, and that the Secretariat could be relied on to finalize the document correctly. Given the intensity of the negotiations on its substance, it would be regrettable if its adoption were delayed until September 2008.

60. **Ms. Houngbedji** (Benin) said that despite the President's appeal, her delegation was unable to agree to adopt the draft resolution in its present form. Its operative paragraphs were in the wrong order and it did not have a document symbol. There had been difficulties in the past when documents had been adopted in an improper form, typically after long negotiations lasting deep into the night.

61. **The President** pointed out that regardless of the document's formal shortcomings, which arose from the multiple steps of the negotiations that had been pursued until the last possible moment, its substance had been agreed by consensus. Failure to adopt the draft resolution at the present session could be viewed as a lack of will on the part of the Council to deal with the important issue of assistance to the least developed countries.

62. **Mr. Khane** (Secretary of the Council) said that if the substance of the draft resolution were adopted immediately, it would be issued in the habitual form on Monday or, at the latest, Tuesday morning of the following week.

63. **Mr. Blake** (Observer for Antigua and Barbuda) speaking on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, said that for logistical reasons, it would not be desirable to delay adoption until September 2008. The Council would have to meet once more, that afternoon, to consider at least one other document with textual adjustments; he therefore proposed that the draft resolution should be reconsidered at that meeting. He paid tribute to all the delegations involved in the negotiations.

64. **Ms. Houngbedji** (Benin) said that that was exactly her point: before it could be adopted the draft resolution must be issued in a form that respected efforts made by all the members of the Council.

65. **The President** pointed out that in any event, it would not be possible to translate the document into

* Subsequently issued as document E/2008/L.38.

the other five official languages by the afternoon meeting.

66. **Mr. Alim** (Observer for Bangladesh) expressed support for the view put forward by the Observer for Antigua and Barbuda on behalf of the Group of 77 and China.

67. **The President** said that in light of the legitimate concerns of some members, the matter would be taken up again in the afternoon. The Council would then have before it a document in the proper format with an official document symbol, but available only in English.

The meeting rose at 11.57 a.m.

United Nations E/2008/SR.45

Economic and Social Council

Provisional
14 October 2008

Original: English

Substantive session of 2008
Humanitarian affairs segment
General segment

Provisional summary record of the 45th meeting
Held at Headquarters, New York, on Friday, 25 July 2008, at 3 p.m.

President:	Mr. Park In-kook	(Republic of Korea)
later:	Mr. Hoscheit (Vice-President)	(Luxembourg)
later:	Mr. Mérorès (President)	(Haiti)

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(b) Review and coordination of the implementation of the Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries for the Decade 2001-2010 (*continued*)

Adoption of the agenda and other organizational matters (*continued*)

Economic and social repercussions of the Israeli occupation on the living conditions of the Palestinian people in the occupied Palestinian territory, including Jerusalem, and the Arab population in the occupied Syrian Golan (*continued*)

Corrections to this record should be submitted in one of the working languages. They should be set forth in a memorandum and also incorporated in a copy of the record. They should be sent *within one week of the date of this document* to the Chief, Official Records Editing Section, room DC2-750, 2 United Nations Plaza.

08-43937 (E)

In the absence of Mr. Mérorès (Haiti), Mr. Park In-kook (Republic of Korea), Vice-President, took the Chair.

The meeting was called to order at 3.15 p.m.

Special economic, humanitarian and disaster relief assistance (*continued*)

Draft resolution entitled "Strengthening of the coordination of emergency humanitarian assistance of the United Nations" (E/2008/L.28*)

1. **The President** drew attention to draft resolution E/2008/L.28*, entitled "Strengthening of the coordination of emergency humanitarian assistance of the United Nations", and indicated that it contained no programme budget implications.

2. **Mr. Tarragô** (Brazil), introducing draft resolution E/2008/L.28*, said that, as a result of a minor editorial change, the first section of paragraph 11 now read as follows:

> "*Takes note with interest* of the report of the Secretary-General on the use of foreign military assets in disaster relief, emphasizes the fundamentally civilian character of humanitarian assistance ...".

3. **Mr. Delacroix** (France), speaking on behalf of the European Union, requested a vote on the draft resolution, as orally revised.

4. **Ms. Park** Enna (Republic of Korea) said that her delegation, while regretting that the draft resolution had failed to gather a consensus, continued to support it for several reasons. First, in referring to capacity-building, preparedness, risk reduction, gender mainstreaming, the safety and security of humanitarian personnel and ending impunity for attacks on such personnel, it would promote effective delivery of humanitarian assistance. Second, it offered direction on dealing with emerging challenges such as climate change and the food crisis. Third, it sought to involve the first responders providing immediate post-disaster relief, including local Red Cross and Red Crescent societies, national and local non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and community-based organizations, and to use internationally agreed practical guidelines to strengthen the operational and legal frameworks for disaster relief. One major omission remained, however: the issue of timely and unhindered access to populations in need. Not only was access a prerequisite for effective humanitarian response, it increased accountability to the recipients of assistance.

5. **Mr. Delacroix** (France), speaking on behalf of the European Union in explanation of vote before the voting, said that the European Union, whose member States were individually and collectively the world's largest contributors of humanitarian assistance, fully supported the work and role of the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA).

6. All States and other parties involved should act in accordance with international law and international humanitarian law, and the basic principles established by the General Assembly in its resolution 43/131 on humanitarian assistance to victims of natural disasters and similar emergency situations, by providing timely, safe and unhindered access for humanitarian personnel and their equipment to populations in distress. While respect for national sovereignty was a well-established concept, sovereignty must be exercised within the bounds of international law. Humanitarian assistance was a right for victims and a duty for the international community. Restricting or forbidding access to victims aggravated their suffering and could endanger their lives.

7. While welcoming the positive aspects of the draft resolution, including its reference to the Central Emergency Response Fund, the implications of climate change for the humanitarian situation, population displacement, sexual and gender-based violence and ending impunity for attacks on humanitarian workers, the European Union regretted the omission of a reference to access to victims, despite its efforts to accommodate its partners by successively proposing eight different forms of wording on the matter. It believed that the Council should take account of the changes in the international environment or risk diminishing the impact and credibility of its decisions. The member States of the European Union would abstain in the vote on the draft resolution.

8. **Mr. Miyamoto** (Japan) said that his delegation found it extraordinary that the Council should resort to a vote on a draft resolution on humanitarian assistance, and hoped that the experience would not recur. It intended to vote in favour of the draft resolution, which addressed in a balanced way the many aspects of humanitarian assistance, including risk reduction and the gender implications of natural disasters and the food crisis. However, as access to victims was a

prerequisite for effective humanitarian assistance, it regretted the absence of a suitable reference.

9. *Draft resolution E/2008/L.28*, as orally revised, was adopted by 38 votes to none, with 13 abstentions.*

10. **Mr. Frommelt** (Liechtenstein) said that recourse to a vote on the draft resolution had deprived the Council of the opportunity to send a strong signal regarding a common approach to humanitarian assistance. While his delegation had voted in favour, it regretted the absence of a clear reference to access to those in need and to the situation of locally recruited humanitarian workers, who were particularly vulnerable to attack. It hoped that future resolutions on the matter would be more balanced and take full account of the complexities of humanitarian assistance.

11. **Mr. McMahan** (United States of America) said that, despite the many positive elements of the draft resolution, including its emphasis on the coordinating role of the United Nations system and its references to neutrality, impartiality and independence, to preventing, investigating and prosecuting acts of sexual and gender-based violence and to ending impunity for attacks against humanitarian workers, his delegation had felt obliged to abstain in the vote. Omission of a reference to access to the needy left the draft resolution incomplete. In complex disasters, such as the recent cyclone in South-East Asia, lack of access had devastating consequences. There were precedents for consensus-based statements of the importance of access for humanitarian personnel. In the absence of robust wording in the draft resolution, the reference to unhindered access in paragraph 24 of resolution 62/94, on strengthening of the coordination of emergency humanitarian assistance of the United Nations, should be recalled. The international community should send a clear message that it did not easily forget life-threatening restrictions on the ability to provide relief.

12. **Ms. Blitt** (Canada), expressing disappointment that a draft resolution traditionally adopted by consensus should have been put to a vote, said that her delegation had voted in favour after careful consideration of the issue, which was a high priority for all Member States. It welcomed the inclusion of key considerations including the safety and security of humanitarian personnel, strengthening coordination of assistance and needs-based financing. However, it shared the concern at the inability to achieve consensus on the inclusion of a reference to access to civilians in need. Such access was not an aspiration, but a fundamental principle of humanitarian action. It should not be open to interpretation. Future resolutions on the subject should not avoid the access problems which left far too many without life-saving emergency assistance.

13. **Mr. Nebenzya** (Russian Federation) said that his delegation had voted in favour of the draft resolution, but remained concerned that, as the Council had never before voted on the issue in question, it was setting a dangerous precedent and reflecting a worrying tendency on the part of certain States to politicize the humanitarian activities of the Organization. Future such resolutions should be adopted by consensus.

14. **Mr. Blake** (Observer for Antigua and Barbuda), speaking on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, said that, while his Group welcomed the adoption of the draft resolution, it regretted the manner of its adoption. The Group attached the utmost importance to humanitarian assistance and remained unopposed to any reference to safe, timely and unhindered access for the provision of such assistance, with the consent of the affected State and in compliance with General Assembly resolution 46/182 on strengthening of the coordination of humanitarian emergency assistance of the United Nations. The request for a vote negated the agreement and compromise seen during the negotiations in the run-up to the draft resolution and diminished the importance of the issue.

15. Again, because of the importance it attached to such assistance, the Group regretted the repeated rejection of its proposal — based on previous successfully adopted wording — to include a reference to strengthening humanitarian assistance for civilians living under foreign occupation. In a spirit of compromise, the Group had also consented to the omission of many of its other proposals, including reference to assistance for countries affected by the global food crisis, to support from the international financial institutions and to transfers of new technology. It nevertheless welcomed the innovative references to the safety and security of humanitarian personnel, gender mainstreaming, disaster risk reduction and preparedness, capacity-building, the relationship between emergency assistance, rehabilitation and development, and the reaffirmation of the principles governing humanitarian activity.

16. **Mr. Tarragô** (Brazil) said that, while it had proved impossible to secure a consensus for the draft resolution despite many hours of negotiation, humanitarian assistance would continue to receive the Member States' support. Such assistance was a pillar of the Organization, which was expected to play a role in delivering it in an effective and neutral manner.

17. **Mr. Cancela** (Uruguay), speaking also on behalf of Argentina, Bolivia, Chile, Costa Rica, the Dominican Republic, Guatemala, Honduras, Panama, Paraguay and Peru, welcomed the adoption of the resolution but regretted the Council's recourse to a vote. Unity of action was essential to provide a faster and more effective United Nations system response to humanitarian emergencies of all kinds. It was a matter of regret too that the draft made no mention of safe, timely and unhindered access for humanitarian workers, supplies and equipment. That aspect should be taken up again in 2009, as it was vital to the effectiveness of aid and was therefore of significance to the developing countries suffering successive disasters. More effort should be made to understand the role of humanitarian personnel relative to governments and victims.

18. Humanitarian assistance should be viewed comprehensively, with the Council fostering trust, focusing on operational efforts and emphasizing impartiality. Despite the complexity and sensitivity of the matter, Member States should not lose sight of the main goal of humanitarian assistance, which was to save the victims of humanitarian emergencies while protecting relief workers and operating in accordance with the humanitarian principles of General Assembly resolutions 46/182 and 58/114 and with international law, including international humanitarian law and national legislation.

19. **Ms. Halabi** (Observer for the Syrian Arab Republic) welcomed the adoption of the draft resolution, as a result of the objective it expressed and the positive effect it would have for the peoples of the world who fell victim to natural disasters and complex emergencies. However, access for humanitarian personnel, a matter of singular importance, had been omitted, with consensus being impeded by the Western States' refusal to consider the matter of access to populations under foreign occupation, who depended on humanitarian assistance almost exclusively. Yet her delegation, along with the other members of the Group of 77 and China, had not been seeking the inclusion of anything over and above what the Council had stated in paragraphs 7 and 8 of its resolution 50/2004 on strengthening of the coordination of humanitarian emergency assistance of the United Nations.

20. It appeared that some Member States, without declaring their intention explicitly, and in an effort to politicize all humanitarian activity, wished to alter the principles and purposes of the Charter of the United Nations and introduce double standards. The legal progress made in the Council and other international forums regarding the illegitimacy of foreign occupation, and the responsibility for the humanitarian tragedy it brought, must be preserved.

21. **Ms. Emery** (New Zealand) said that her delegation had voted in favour of the draft resolution, which contained strengthened language on the safety and security of humanitarian personnel, gender and support to resident humanitarian coordinators, and new language on the Guidelines for the Domestic Facilitation and Regulation of International Disaster Relief and Initial Recovery Assistance, adopted at the thirtieth International Conference of the Red Cross and Red Crescent in November 2007 and the need to better link humanitarian and climate change efforts. Her delegation looked forward to working with other delegations, including at the next session of the General Assembly, on other improvements that might be made.

22. **Ms. Nawaz** (Pakistan) welcomed the adoption of the draft resolution. The text covered many important aspects, such as capacity-building, disaster risk reduction and preparedness, the relationship between emergency assistance, rehabilitation and development, food security, climate change, and the safety and security of humanitarian personnel. Her delegation had hoped that the text would have addressed the different needs of OCHA and other relevant bodies; in that regard, it was regrettable that no reference had been made to access and other issues of concern to developing countries.

23. Assistance should be based on actual needs and delivered by impartial and neutral actors and at the request of the affected State. The civilian character of humanitarian assistance should also be fully maintained. Moreover, respect for the sovereignty, territorial integrity and national unity of States must remain the overarching parameter of all efforts to coordinate and provide humanitarian assistance, in line

with General Assembly resolution 46/182. It was regrettable that the draft resolution had been put to a vote; she hoped that all sides would demonstrate flexibility the following year, so that such a scenario could be avoided.

24. **Mr. Ochoa** (Observer for Mexico) said that his delegation endorsed the statement made by the representative of Uruguay. It was regrettable that the draft resolution did not address the issue of safe, rapid and unimpeded access for humanitarian personnel; access was a fundamental prerequisite for effective humanitarian assistance. It was also regrettable that the draft resolution had been put to a vote. It did not mean, however, that the international community could not continue to work together to ensure that the United Nations system responded more rapidly and more effectively to humanitarian emergencies.

Oral decision

25. **The President** suggested that the Council take note of the report of the Secretary-General on strengthening emergency relief, rehabilitation, reconstruction, recovery and prevention in the aftermath of the Indian Ocean tsunami disaster (E/2008/80).

26. *It was so decided.*

27. **Ms. Bragg** (Assistant Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Deputy Emergency Relief Coordinator) noted with satisfaction that there had been an alignment between Member States and humanitarian actors in defining priority humanitarian concerns. The importance of access as a fundamental operational prerequisite for humanitarian response and the safety of humanitarian personnel had been reaffirmed by most Member States during the humanitarian affairs segment. Indeed, without humanitarian access, efforts to strengthen humanitarian assistance would be in vain. Those concerns and others — including the plight of the millions of people affected by the humanitarian implications of climate change, the global food security crisis, displacement and gender mainstreaming in humanitarian assistance — were reflected in the resolution just adopted. The resolution had also acknowledged her Office's own efforts to enhance the equity, efficacy, speed, accountability and predictability of humanitarian response.

28. Noting that the work of humanitarians was becoming increasingly difficult and insecure she welcomed Member States' reassurances that the safety and security of humanitarian personnel and their timely and unimpeded access to vulnerable populations would remain a priority and paid tribute to humanitarian workers in the field.

29. It was clear from the discussions that Member States and other stakeholders acknowledged the gravity and interconnectivity of the major humanitarian challenges currently facing the world. The global food security crisis and the humanitarian implications of climate change affected everyone and required the world to act in a coordinated and concerted manner. The discussions had also demonstrated how those challenges exacerbated ongoing humanitarian crises such as poverty and internal displacement.

30. Panellists had stressed during the panel discussion on the humanitarian challenges related to global food aid, including enhancing international efforts and cooperation in this field, that every effort must be made to alleviate the suffering of those affected, and that immediate steps must be taken to address critical emergency needs while also addressing the longer term structural issues that had created the current situation. The Comprehensive Framework for Action, submitted by the Secretary-General to the General Assembly just the previous week, promoted a new way of working together in support of national Governments to ensure greater food security around the world.

31. Turning to the humanitarian impact of climate change, she noted that during the past decade, natural hazards had affected 2.5 billion people and caused economic losses totalling $570 billion. Panellists had agreed that the poorest and most vulnerable were usually hit hardest and had identified a number of important priority actions, including the need to strengthen national capacities and streamline disaster management, climate change adaptation and the humanitarian response to natural hazards. A similar consensus had emerged at the side event organized by the International Strategy for Disaster Reduction (ISDR), which had clearly identified the national level as the front line of defence and the area where enhanced capacities for climate risk management and adaptation were needed most.

32. While she welcomed the fact that the donor response to global consolidated humanitarian appeals had been higher in 2008 than in the two previous years — to date, $2.9 billion of the $6.5 billion requested had been received — she noted that, the United Nations and its humanitarian partners still required an additional $3.4 billion to respond to the world's most severe crises and the global food crisis. She encouraged Member States to continue their flexible and multi-year support to the United Nations and its humanitarian partners.

33. She was pleased to note that funding mechanisms such as the Central Emergency Response Fund (CERF) were generating much support. Achieving a more rapid, effective and needs-based humanitarian response was an ongoing process. In that regard, efforts to strengthen the resident and humanitarian coordinator system should be continued.

34. On the strengthening of gender mainstreaming in humanitarian response, she noted that the policy statement on gender equality in humanitarian action recently adopted by the Inter-Agency Standing Committee on Post-War and Disaster Reconstruction and Rehabilitation (IASC) provided additional guidance on how better to mainstream gender in humanitarian assistance. Turning to the use of foreign military assets in international disaster relief, she endorsed the reaffirmation by all partners that humanitarian assistance should remain a predominantly civilian concern. The Council's discussions on the issue had noted that, in addition to the Guidelines on the Use of Military and Civil Defence Assets in Disaster Relief (Oslo Guidelines) — which remained the overarching framework — regional frameworks for the use of foreign military assets were being developed and successfully implemented. She welcomed the fact that participating organizations and actors had reiterated the need for enhanced civil-military coordination.

35. She expressed appreciation to Member States for their concrete suggestions on how to move the access issue forward, particularly within intergovernmental forums such as the Council. Improving access in concrete and practical terms remained a key priority for everyone. She sincerely hoped that, in future resolutions on humanitarian assistance, Member States would reach agreement on how to address the issue of access. In closing, she expressed her appreciation to all Member States for supporting OCHA and its efforts to strengthen the coordination of humanitarian assistance; she hoped that the momentum generated during the segment would be continued, so as to ensure that the fruits of their collective thinking could be put into action for the benefit of all people in need.

36. **The President** expressed his appreciation to all those who had participated in, and contributed to, the 2008 humanitarian affairs segment. The fact that everyone had deemed the principle of access to be very important was a positive step. The resolution just adopted had underscored a number of important issues. It condemned attacks against humanitarian personnel; urged Member States to prosecute acts of gender-based violence, including sexual violence in humanitarian emergencies; urged Member States to strengthen disaster preparedness; reiterated the need for national capacity-building; and acknowledged the progress made in a number of key assistance coordination processes. It was regrettable that it had not been possible to adopt the draft resolution — a forward-looking text — by consensus. Indeed, the resolution's traditional adoption by consensus was the source of its moral authority. He hoped that a constructive spirit of engagement would continue to prevail during the consideration of humanitarian affairs at the upcoming session of the General Assembly.

37. *Mr. Hoscheit (Luxembourg), Vice-President, took the Chair.*

Implementation of and follow-up to major United Nations conferences and summits (*continued*)

(b) Review and coordination of the implementation of the Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries for the Decade 2001-2010 (*continued*)

Draft resolution entitled "Implementation of the Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries for the Decade 2001-2010"

38. **The President** invited the Council to adopt the draft resolution entitled "Implementation of the Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries for the Decade 2001-2010".* The draft resolution, which had been circulated in English only, contained no programme budget implications.

39. *The draft resolution was adopted.*

* Subsequently circulated as document E/2008/L.38.

40. **Mr. Delacroix** (France) said that his delegation endorsed the comments made by the representative of Benin at the morning meeting (E/2008/SR.44). It was essential for documents to be issued in all six official languages; he expressed appreciation to the Secretariat for its efforts in that regard.

41. Speaking on behalf of the European Union, he said that the European Union remained committed to the implementation of the Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries for the Decade 2001-2010; indeed, it had been, and continued to be, a strong supporter of the least developed countries. In that regard, he stressed the importance of each of the seven commitments of the Programme of Action.

42. The European Union welcomed the progress made in the areas of economic growth and human development, but noted with concern that extreme poverty remained high in the least developed countries and that malnutrition was on the increase, particularly among women and children. Moreover, there had been very little progress with respect to gender equality in education and none at all with respect to maternal mortality. As the draft resolution just adopted quite rightly stated, there were important linkages between development, poverty eradication and gender equality.

43. The convening of a fourth United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries towards the end of the current decade would afford development partners an opportunity to conduct a comprehensive review of the Programme of Action's implementation and decide on follow-up measures. The European Union eagerly awaited the note being prepared by the Secretary-General outlining the modalities of such a conference, including its preparatory process, pursuant to General Assembly resolution 62/203.

44. *Mr. Mérorès (Haiti) took the Chair.*

Adoption of the agenda and other organizational matters (*continued*) (E/2008/L.35 and L.36)

Draft Decision entitled "Theme for the 2009 thematic discussion of the Economic and Social Council" (E/2008/L.35)

45. **The President** invited the Council to adopt draft decision E/2008/L.35 entitled "Theme for the 2009 thematic discussion of the Economic and Social Council".

46. *Draft decision E/2008/L.35 was adopted.*

Draft decision entitled "Multi-year programme of work for the 2010 and 2011 annual ministerial reviews of the Economic and Social Council" (E/2008/L.36)

47. **The President** invited the Council to adopt draft decision E/2008/L.36 entitled "Multi-year programme of work for the 2010 and 2011 annual ministerial reviews of the Economic and Social Council".

48. *Draft decision E/2008/L.36 was adopted.*

Closure of the session

49. **Mr. Sha** Zukang (Under-Secretary-General for Economic and Social Affairs) said that the current session was the culmination of the process of implementing the mandates granted at the 2005 World Summit. It also marked a new beginning for the Council. The first manifestation of that new beginning was the breadth and depth of engagement of all stakeholders in preparations for the session and in the session itself; that had contributed significantly to the success of the first Development Cooperation Forum, which offered an important nexus between political and normative dialogue, and technical expertise. The candid and broad-based discussions had underscored the value of an inclusive and universally recognized forum for global dialogue and policy review of international development cooperation. The nationally led preparatory meetings had been particularly effective in enabling broad interaction among stakeholders and in gauging the gaps and obstacles in international development cooperation. He encouraged Member States to consider hosting such preparatory meetings for the 2010 Forum.

50. The annual ministerial review had also opened new avenues, not only for enhancing accountability, but also for strengthening the global partnership at the heart of the United Nations development agenda. For the first time, developed countries had made national presentations and given the Council an opportunity to discuss their development cooperation policies. He had been heartened by both the candour of discussions and the determination to improve policies and achieve better results. The national voluntary presentations would generate new ways of exchanging lessons learned and scaling up best practices. In that regard, he hoped that all stakeholders would engage in dialogue

through the e-forum provided by the recently launched "Development strategies that work" website.

51. The annual ministerial review had sent an unequivocal message that every effort should be made to achieve the goal of sustainable development. The Council had also considered the most pressing contemporary issues — the global food crisis, rising oil prices, financial turmoil and climate change. The crux of the Council's message regarding those issues, was that, first, such challenges should be addressed in a comprehensive manner. Second, there were no quick fixes; there was a clear need for both short- and long-term measures, particularly in the case of the food and fuel crises. Third, collective action was central to the success of the international community's efforts to find lasting and durable solutions to those challenges. The Council could serve as an effective forum for launching such action. Its potential must be utilized fully.

52. The current session, like previous sessions, had established the Council's key role in ensuring coherence and coordination in United Nations system activities. The operational activities segment had set in motion the implementation of the triennial comprehensive policy review of operational activities for development of the United Nations system. Similarly, the coordination segment had helped bring the United Nations system together in the pursuit of a multi-dimensional approach to poverty and hunger eradication.

53. The Council had also emphasized the need for concerted, coordinated and rapid action to address the humanitarian impact of climate change and the global food security crisis, the most serious humanitarian challenges facing the world today. It had also stressed that national capacity-building for local institutions remained a priority. The humanitarian affairs segment had sent a clear message that the provision of humanitarian assistance needed to be strengthened further in order for it to become more timely, accountable, equitable and accessible.

54. In the area of peacebuilding and post-conflict development, the Council had, once again, in recognition of the role that it could play in supporting Haiti's long-term development extended the mandate of the Ad Hoc Advisory Group on Haiti. The Department of Economic and Social Affairs stood ready to continue its substantive support to the Group and to facilitate its work to the extent possible, within existing resources. He had also been encouraged by the stimulating discussion on the need to strengthen linkages between the Council and the Peacebuilding Commission; in that regard, the Department of Economic and Social Affairs, in collaboration with the Peacebuilding Support Office, would explore ways of implementing the very useful ideas presented to the Council.

55. Lastly, it was important to build on the session's success to ensure that the Council became a thriving forum for deliberating and acting upon the most pressing development challenges. That would require not only political will, but also thorough preparations and continuous engagement. In that regard, he urged countries to plan and participate in Council-related preparatory activities, particularly those for the annual ministerial review and Development Cooperation Forum. Such year-round engagement would be key to the success of the next session.

56. **The President** said that the 2008 substantive session could be considered a truly historic session, in that it had brought the new functions of the Economic and Social Council fully into effect. With the launch of the Development Cooperation Forum, significant strides had been made in positioning the Council as the principal forum for global dialogue and policy review on the effectiveness and coherence of international development cooperation.

57. He welcomed the fact that the Council had been able to contribute to initiatives taken to achieve the goal of sustainable development by bringing various stakeholders together; addressing emerging challenges such as climate change, rising food and oil prices and loss of biodiversity; and, most importantly, adopting the Ministerial Declaration. Referring to the vital role played by the annual ministerial review, he highlighted in particular the positive and substantial exchanges of information facilitated by the national voluntary presentations. The participation by developed countries in 2008 had been especially welcome as it showed the versatility of the presentations and marked a step forward in promoting accountability in the fulfilment of international commitments in development cooperation. As for the developing countries that had made voluntary presentations, while each had shared its unique experiences, all had agreed that the eradication of poverty could only be achieved by pursuing development that was economically, socially

and ecologically sustainable. Noting that one of the lessons learned over the previous two years was the need to ensure a balance in the participation of developing and developed countries and among regions, he reiterated a call for more developed countries to volunteer to give presentations and for some of the developing countries that had already volunteered for 2009 to defer their presentations to a later year.

58. At the operational activities segment, the Council had issued a strong call for urgent implementation of the guidance given by the General Assembly in its triennial comprehensive policy review of operational activities. The action-oriented and focused resolution adopted in that regard set out a management process for the implementation of General Assembly resolution 62/208 and provided guidance on the resident coordinator system and the simplification and harmonization of the United Nations development system, as well as clearly acknowledging the Council's role in exercising oversight over the work of funds and programmes in implementation of the provisions of resolution 62/208.

59. He expressed his appreciation for the strong support of Member States in addressing the humanitarian impact of current major challenges, and in particular for encouraging further strengthening of the coordination of emergency humanitarian response. In addition, he welcomed the way in which the Council's role in peacekeeping and post-conflict development had been recognized and promoted, as demonstrated by the extension of the mandate of the Ad Hoc Advisory Group on Haiti. The Council was also taking steps to strengthen its relationship with the Peacebuilding Commission; he hoped that initial informal discussions would pave the way for closer ties between the two bodies.

60. Acknowledging the vital contributions made by various stakeholders, including representatives from civil society, parliaments, local governments and the private sector, to the various round tables and panels organized, he said that the Council had demonstrated its ability and potential to bring the United Nations system together. During the session, members of the Council had stressed the need for multilateral solutions and collective action to provide a secure and prosperous future for all. With developing countries and countries with economies in transition facing a gloomy financial outlook, and progress towards internationally agreed development goals threatened, it was vital for the Council to foster consensus-building to address those challenges.

61. The conclusion of the 2008 substantive session did not signal the end of the Council's work for the year. It was important to continue to strengthen the role of the Council and, since early preparation was key to the success of the Council's work, planning for the 2009 session should begin without delay. In the autumn, the Council should also focus on responding to its mandate regarding adaptation of its working methods and on finding ways to further strengthen the Council's oversight role with regard to funds and programmes, as envisaged in General Assembly resolution 62/208.

62. **Mr. Blake** (Observer for Antigua and Barbuda), speaking on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, said that, while the 2008 substantive session had certainly been successful, feelings at its close were somewhat mixed. The Council's deliberations had identified critical issues in need of urgent action and requiring additional resources from national governments and the international community, and, as well as revealing gains in some areas of economic and social development, they had also highlighted the need for improvement and the threat of progress being reversed in other areas. The Group of 77 and China had identified areas that it considered vital for development — particularly for the achievement of internationally agreed development goals, including the Millennium Development Goals — where progress was currently lacking.

63. At the current session, the Council had focused, among other areas, on the effectiveness and efficiency of the response of the United Nations development system to the development needs and priorities of developing countries, against the backdrop of a number of multidimensional challenges at the country, regional and global levels. There was a high level of agreement that global challenges such as climate change, the food crisis, the financial crisis, the energy crisis and the crisis in international policy and institutional infrastructure needed to be addressed urgently and in an integrated manner, and that a revitalized Council with its cross-cutting mandate and capacity to bring together stakeholders from all sectors and interest groups was ideally positioned to address such issues.

64. While the Ministerial Declaration and the President's official summary of the Development Cooperation Forum contained very important conclusions, the content and, more importantly, the process of negotiating those conclusions demonstrated the Council's instinct to maintain the status quo and leave critical issues to be dealt with through other mechanisms, even where those mechanisms had made little progress for many years. The Group of 77 and China urged the Council to resist that tendency to stay in the past and on the periphery.

65. During the coordination segment, the Group of 77 and China had underscored the need to ensure a strong and direct link between coordination and development effectiveness. Another important issue was that the policies of developed countries and international institutional partners, including trade and financial policies, were often inconsistent with development goals; those inconsistencies should be considered at future Council sessions so that they could be corrected. During the operational activities segment, the Group of 77 and China had sought to stress the factors that developing countries held to be critical for greater effectiveness of the United Nations development system, bearing in mind that developing countries had the most to lose if that system did not function effectively.

66. The Group of 77 and China believed that the United Nations, through the Council, had the potential to play a stronger role in advancing the development agenda and achieving all internationally agreed development goals. In that regard, the United Nations development system and all development partners needed to work for the full realization of the principle of national ownership and leadership rather than just paying lip-service to it. With regard to the coordination of humanitarian assistance activities, it was also vital for affected States, donor countries, the United Nations system and other humanitarian organizations to work together in providing assistance and development support, recognizing the primary role of the affected State and complying with the provisions of General Assembly resolution 46/182. Such coordination was essential given that a single natural disaster could set back development in a developing country for several decades. In conclusion, reiterating that the 2008 substantive session had demonstrated the potential of a strong Council and established the basis for exploiting its potential, he expressed the hope that future Council sessions would build on that foundation.

67. **Mr. Delacroix** (France), speaking on behalf of the European Union, said that the 2008 substantive session had enabled the Council to make significant progress in developing more interactive and effective working methods. He also highlighted the quality of the discussions held, with particular reference to the Development Cooperation Forum and the Annual Ministerial Review. The European Union had sought to participate in the session constructively and in a spirit of dialogue, and although it did not always agree with other Member States, it always listened attentively and with respect. The European Union would continue to support fully the ongoing efforts required to streamline the work of the Council and strengthen its oversight role.

68. **Mr. Mero** (Observer for the United Republic of Tanzania) thanked the Council for the support it had provided to his Government in preparing the country report presented during the 2008 annual ministerial review and encouraged it to continue providing similar support to other countries. The United Republic of Tanzania would continue to work closely with the Council and support all efforts made to address economic and social issues.

69. **The President** declared closed the 2008 substantive session of the Economic and Social Council.

The meeting rose at 5.40 p.m.